



**The International Seminar “Achievements, success stories and lessons learned of the Aquatic warbler conservation”,**  
**ACTION D.8. Seminar on dissemination of project results**

The Seminar was financed by the EU LIFE programme in frame of the project  
**„Securing sustainable farming to ensure conservation of globally threatened bird species in agrarian landscape“ (BALTIC AQUATIC WARBLER, LIFE09 NAT/LT/000233)**

**SEMINAR REPORT**

**PLACE:** Hotel VENTAINĖ, Marių 7, Ventė village, Šilutė district, Lithuania  
**Date:** 19–20 May, 2015

**ORGANIZED by**  
Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania

**Target group:** scientific community, practitioners dealing with birds conservation in agrarian landscapes, protected areas administrations, state officials from national/foreign countries Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, European Commission, UNEP/CMS Secretariat, non-governmental organizations, students, farmers, local government and rural communities representatives, etc.

**GOALS OF THE SEMINAR**

- dissemination information about the results/achievements of the project;
- sharing experience on practical project implementation process;
- discussion on further maintenance on the managed area and needs for additional initiatives to ensure Aquatic warbler conservation;
- sharing knowledge on various policy and support mechanisms relating to conservation of meadow birds.

**THEMES OF THE SEMINAR**

- I. Restoration of Aquatic warbler habitats: habitat quality in species range, restoration tools and techniques, progress achieved, stories of success and challenges.

- II. Stakeholder engagement for securing Aquatic warbler breeding success.
- III. Establishment of long-term habitat maintenance mechanisms for Aquatic warbler conservation.
- IV. Future plans and perspectives for securing favorable conservation status of globally threatened Aquatic warbler.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

55 participants from 9 European countries:

Lithuania (26), Germany (7), Poland (6), Latvia (5), France (4), Belarus (3), Ukraine (2), Belgium (1), Hungary (1).

## **CONTENT OF THE EVENT**

### ***Introduction to the project “Baltic Aquatic warbler”***

Project manager Ž. Morkvėnas introduced the participants to the project objectives, actions, challenges and achievements in protecting of Aquatic warbler and restoring their breeding habitats (~1300 ha) by removal of bushes and old phytomass of grassy vegetation, elimination of reeds, mowing of wet grassland, etc. To evaluate the success of the project activities monitoring of Aquatic warbler population (annually) and vegetation survey (every two years) were carried out. Briefly discussed other project activities: establishing preconditions for the habitat maintenance (road construction in Tyrai and Žuvintas sites), demonstration facility for late cut biomass processing (Žuvintas site), design of agri-environmental measure for AW conservation, working with farmers and local community (dialogue meetings, social events), study visits, publications, practical conservation contracts (in 2014), visitor infrastructure, etc.

M.O’Briain (Nature Unit, European Commission) presented main ideas about the conservation efforts on endangered bird species, achievements and latest developments towards securing favourable conservation status of globally threatened species in the EU. It was emphasized that management/restoration of Natura 2000 territories relates to ensuring fully functional network of conservation areas, finalizing sites designation, defining conservation objectives and establishment conservation measures, using best available science, engagement landowners and users and provide guidance (e.g. agriculture and forestry) as well, and promote sharing of experience and expertise on management/ restoration.

### ***Session I: Restoration of Aquatic warbler habitats: habitat quality in species range, restoration tools and techniques, progress achieved, stories of success and challenges.***

(4 oral presentations)

Speakers from Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Belarus presented tools and techniques used for restoration of Aquatic warbler habitats in Project sites (Lithuania, Latvia) and other European countries as well. Moreover, it was discussed geolocator method for study connectivity between wintering and breeding sites and highlighted current priorities in Aquatic warbler conservation in Europe and Africa (full count of European AW population, continuation of research on migration by geolocation method, translocation feasibility study, to develop economically sustainable methods of fen management and biomass use, etc.).

Baltic Aquatic Warbler project manager presented main achievements in restoration of AW breeding habitats: ~1300 ha of wet meadows and fens habitats were restored (improved condition by removal of shrubs, old grassy vegetation carpet, elimination of reeds, management of habitats hydrological regime in Tyrai and Žuvintas sites), monitoring of AW population and vegetation dynamic in project sites, establishment agri-environmental scheme, etc.

**Session II:** *Stakeholder engagement for securing Aquatic warbler breeding success.*

(2 oral presentations)

Speaker from Baltic Environmental Forum Lithuania exchanged experiences on stakeholders' engagement for Aquatic Warbler conservation in Lithuania (individual and group consultations, AW welcome festivals, Café Scientifique, children book-toy, documentary film, good practice example study visit for farmers, etc.).

A joint report on contribution of agri-environmental measures under Rural Development Programmes for AW conservation in Lithuania and Poland was presented too.

**Session III:** *Establishment of long-term habitat maintenance mechanisms for Aquatic warbler conservation*

(3 oral presentations)

The participants were introduced about experience on using of late cut biomass from AW habitats in Lithuania and Poland. The requirements for biomass quality, in order to produce grass pellets, were discussed: optimal moisture of biomass for processing is 15-20%, if more than 30%, then there is a need for drying; homogeneous structure (mixture of sedges, reeds, grasses, suckers of bushes and trees make hard to process, because the equipment is clogged).

Fire management as a tool for habitat restoration (Belarus experience) was discussed as well. Advantages of fire management: improvement of vegetation productivity; increase in insect biomass; good conditions for nesting due to partial preservation of old vegetation; new habitats for species of open sedge fens are created by burning down of dense reed beds; shrubs are prevented from spreading; spring fire hazards, which are dangerous for man and ecosystems, posed by dry mires are eliminated, etc.

**Session IV:** *Future plans and perspectives for securing favorable conservation status of globally threatened Aquatic warbler*

(6 oral presentations)

Participants took part in the discussion on further scientific research needs and strategy for conservation of Aquatic Warbler in breeding and wintering sites, by using translocation method. The participants were introduced to the African-Euroasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan.

**OUTPUTS:**

- **Shared experience** on latest development on scientific research and conservation of Aquatic Warbler at the national and international level.
- **16 Oral presentations** (available on <http://www.meldine.lt/international-seminar/179-registration> )
- **Information about the seminar in national and international media:**
  - **2 internet articles in Lithuanian** (see Annex No. 3)
  - **1 internet article in English** (see Annex No. 3)

**ANNEXES:**

1. Programme of the Conference
2. Conference participants list.
3. List of information about the Seminar and in National and International media.



## International Seminar

# Achievements, success stories and lessons learned of the Aquatic warbler conservation

## PROGRAMME

### Excursion scheduled on May 18<sup>th</sup>, Monday (starting at app. 17.00):

*Tyrai fen mire and Šyša polder flooded meadows – the biggest Aquatic warbler breeding site in Lithuania, “Baltic Aquatic warbler” project habitat restoration site.*

### May 19<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday

Optional morning excursion to Ventė Cape Ornithological Station  
(starting at 9.00)

12.00	<b>Registration and lunch break</b>	
13.00	<b>Opening words, introduction to the Seminar and the project “Baltic Aquatic warbler”</b>	<i>Žymantas Morkvėnas, Baltic Environmental Forum</i>
13.30	<b>Conservation efforts, achievements and latest developments towards securing favourable conservation status of globally threatened species in European Union</b>	<i>Micheál Ó Briain, Deputy Head of Nature Unit, European Commission</i>
<b>Session I: Restoration of Aquatic warbler habitats: habitat quality in species range, restoration tools and techniques, progress achieved, stories of success and challenges</b>		
14.00	<b>Update on the global situation and the conservation status of Aquatic warbler</b>	<i>Dr. Martin Flade, Chairman of International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team</i>
14.15	<b>Towards favourable conservation status of Aquatic warbler: habitat restoration strategy and conservation mechanism</b>	<i>Dr. Jarosław Krogulec, OTOP, International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team</i>

14.45	<b>Achievements, challenges and successes of the “Baltic Aquatic warbler” project and Aquatic warbler population trend in Lithuania</b> <i>Žymantas Morkvėnas, Baltic Environmental Forum; Dr. Žydrūnas Preikša, Aleksandras Stulginskis University, International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team</i>
15.10	<b>Current state and perspectives of restoration of Aquatic warbler breeding range outside European Union (experience from Belarus)</b> <i>Dr. Alexander Kozulin, Scientific and Practical Center for Bio-Resources</i>
15.40	<b>Coffee break</b>

## **Session II: Stakeholder engagement for securing Aquatic warbler breeding success**

16.15	<b>Stakeholder engagement for conservation of Aquatic warbler: achievements and lessons learned from experience in Lithuania</b> <i>Radvilė Jankevičienė, Baltic Environmental Forum</i>
16.45	<b>Contribution of agri-environmental measures under Rural Development Programmes for the Aquatic warbler conservation in Lithuania and Poland: comparative overview and local experiences</b> <i>Žymantas Morkvėnas, Baltic Environmental Forum; Dr. Jarosław Krogulec, OTOP</i>
17.15	<b>Questions and discussion, summary of the day</b>
17.30	<b>End of the first seminar day</b>
18.00	<b>Dinner combined with excursion on the project site</b>
19.30	<b>Informal networking and mingle event with local stakeholders at the Tulkaragė polder project site</b>

## **May 20<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday**

9.00	<b>Opening of the second Seminar day</b>
<b>Session III: Establishment of long-term habitat maintenance mechanisms for Aquatic warbler conservation</b>	
9.10	<b>Use of late-cut biomass as product from Aquatic warbler habitats – Lithuanian experience</b> <i>Arūnas Pranaitis, Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve</i>
9.30	<b>Biomass use from Aquatic warbler conservation experience in Poland</b> <i>Dr. Jarosław Krogulec, OTOP, International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team Dariusz Gatkowski, OTOP</i>
9.50	<b>Fire management as habitat restoration and maintenance mechanism – experience of successes and challenges from Belarus</b> <i>Dr. Alexander Kozulin, Scientific and Practical Centre for Bio-Resources</i>
10.10	<b>Questions and discussion</b>
10.30	<b>Coffee break</b>

<b>Session IV: Future plans and perspectives for securing favourable conservation status of globally threatened Aquatic warbler</b>	
11.00	<b>Future strategy for conservation of Aquatic warbler in its breeding grounds</b> <i>Dr. Jarosław Krogulec, OTOP, International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team</i>
11.20	<b>Introduction to the future ideas of Aquatic warbler conservation in Lithuania and Belarus</b> <i>Žymantas Morkvėnas, Baltic Environmental Forum; Dr. Alexander Kozulin, Scientific and Practical Centre for Bio-Resources</i>
11.40	<b>Current research on AW ecology in SE-Polish breeding sites and its potential contribution to AW conservation</b> <i>Joana Dziarska, Department of Zoology, Poznan University of Life Sciences; ACROLA</i>
12.00	<b>Discussion on further scientific research needs to contribute to the conservation of Aquatic warbler in its breeding range</b>
12.20	<b>Status and evolution of the Aquatic Warbler wintering sites in West Africa</b> <i>Cosima Tegetmeyer, Greifswald Mire Centre, International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team</i>
12.50	<b>The African-Eurasian Migratory Landbirds Action Plan: an Introduction</b> <i>Borja Heredia, UNEP/CMS Secretariat</i>
13.10	<b>Conclusion and closing remarks</b>
13.30	<b>End of the seminar and lunch</b>

The “Third Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding concerning Conservation Measures for the Aquatic Warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*, May 20–21)” will start on the same day (May 20<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday) by registration at 13.00 following by starting meeting at 15.00.

**Evening guided excursions on May 20<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday starting at 19.00:**

- **Option 1:** Tyrai fen mire – the biggest Aquatic warbler breeding site in Lithuania, “Baltic Aquatic warbler” project habitat restoration site.
- **Option 2:** Aukštumala raised bog – *locus classicus* for wetlands conservation science; restoration of the bog habitats.



*Projekta iš dalies finansuoja Europos Sąjungos LIFE+ programa,  
Lietuvos Respublika, Latvijos Respublika ir projekto partneriai*

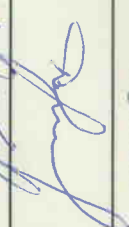




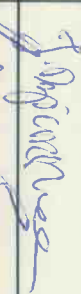

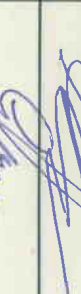






Project: „Securing sustainable farming to ensure conservation of globally threatened bird species in agrarian landscape“  
Projektas: „Aplinkai palankaus ūkininkavimo skatinimas siekiant užtikrinti nykstančių agrarinio kraštovaizdžio paukščių apsaugą“  
Projekto Nr. LIFE09 NAT/LT/000233

**DALYVIŲ SĄRAŠAS/ PARTICIPANT LIST**

International seminar “Achievements, success stories and lessons learned of the Aquatic warbler conservation”  
2015 m. gegužė 19-20 d., viešbutis Ventainė, Marių g. 7, Ventė village, Šilutė district





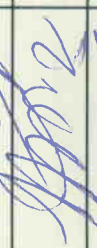





<i>Nr./ No</i>	<i>Vardas, Pavardė/ Name, Surname</i>	<i>Organizacija/ Organisation</i>	<i>Kontaktinis telefonas/ Contact phone</i>	<i>El. pašto adresas/ E-mail address</i>	<i>Parašas/ Signature</i>
1.	Andrijauskas Kęstutis	Lithuanian Farmer's Union, Lithuania		zupk.kestutis@gmail.com	
2.	Anuškevičius Džiugas	Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. Lithuania	+37068743801	dziugas.anuskevicius@am.lt	
3.	Bačelytė Inga	Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Lithuania	+37063853458	inga.bacelyte@gmail.com	
4.	Balčiūnas Valdas	JSC Goldengrass, Lithuania	861515387	info@goldengrass.lt	
5.	Baublys Gintaras	Administration of Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, Lithuania		g.baublys@zuvintas.lt	
6.	Blaize Christine	Bretagne Vivante, France	0607095733	christine.blaize@bretagne- vivante.org	

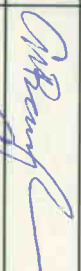










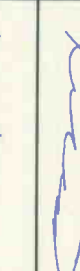
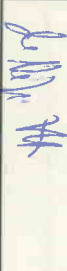


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7.	Čebatariūnaitė Dalia	State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, Lithuania	865067342	dalia.cebatariumaitė@vstt.lt	
8.	Dieninytė Vaida	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania	867029135	vaيدا.dieninyte@bef.lt	
9.	Dobrovolskytė Monika	Šyša Community, Lithuania	8633322325	monika.dobrovolskyte@gmail.com	
10.	Domashlinets Volodymyr	Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, Ukraine	+380442063127	vdomashlinets@yahoo.com	
11.	Dzenis Jekabs	Nature Conservation agency, Latvia	26101348	jekabs.dzenis@daba.gov.lv	
12.	Dziarska Joanna	Poznan University of Life Sciences, ACROLA, Poland	+48514442728	dziarska.joanna@gmail.com	
13.	Flade Martin	Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve, Germany		martin.flade@lugv.brandenburg.de	
14.	Foucher Julien	ACROLA, France	+33663332586	julienfoucher44@gmail.com	
15.	Górski Krzysztof	Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), Poland		k.gorski@cityenergy.pl	
16.	Gunta Gabrane	Nature Conservation agency, Latvia	29123431	gunta.gabrane@daba.gov.lv	
17.	Hemery David	Association Grumpy Nature, France		association.grumpynature@hotmail i.fr	
18.	Heredia Borja	UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Germany	+4917663451205	bheredia@cms.int	
19.	Herold Benjamin	LIFE Schreiadler Biosphere Reserve Schorfheide-Chorin, Germany		benjamin.herold@lugv.brandenbur g.de	
20.	Hofmanis Helmutis	Nature Conservation agency, Latvia	+371 26444121	helmutis.hofmanis@daba.gov.lv	






Nr./ No	Vardas, Pavardė/ Name, Surname	Organizacija/ Organisation	Kontaktinis telefonas/ Contact phone	El. pašto adresas/ E-mail address	Parašas/ Signature
21.	Jakštaitė Aurelija	Tourism Agency, Šilutė, Lithuania		info@upate.lt aurelijaj@hotmail.com	
22.	Jankevičienė Radvilė	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania	866240469	radville.jankeviciene@bef.lt	
23.	Jefanovas Aivaras	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania	868443632	aivaras.jefanovas@bef.lt	
24.	Karlonas Marius	Lithuanian Ornithological Society, Lithuania	865420363	marius.karlonas@birdlife.lt	
25.	Keišs Oskars	Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia	+371 29236300	oskars.keiss@lu.lv	
26.	Keterienė Kristina	Directorate of Nemunas Delta Regional Park, Lithuania	869994322	k.keteriene@nemunodelta.lt	
27.	Kilijan Grzegorz	AWCT, Poland	48 695403121	gkilijan@wp.pl	
28.	Klimavičius Algirdas	Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, Lithuania	868617285	algirdas.klimavicius@am.lt	
29.	Kozulin Alexander	NPC on Bioresources National Academy of Science Belarus, Belarus		kozulina@yandex.ru	
30.	Krogulec Jaroslaw	Polish Society for the Protection of Birds (OTOP), Poland	0048607565124	jaroslaw.krogulec@otop.org.pl	
31.	Lachmann Lars	NABU (Birdlife Germany), Germany	+49-50-284984-1620 +49-172-9108225	lars.lachmann@nabu.de	
32.	Langgemach Torsten	Brandenburg State Bird Conservation Centre, Germany	+49/117374/60257	torsten.langgemach@lugv.branden burg.de	
33.	Ledard Michel	Service du patrimoine naturel - Unité Biodiversité, France	+33 02 98334441 +33 0625987392	Michel.LEDARD@developpement -durable.gouv.fr	

<i>Nr./ No</i>	<i>Vardas, Pavardė/ Name, Surname</i>	<i>Organizacija/ Organisation</i>	<i>Kontaktinis telefonas/ Contact phone</i>	<i>El. pašto adresas/ E-mail address</i>	<i>Parašas/ Signature</i>
34.	Lengvinas Petras	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania		plengvinas@gmail.com	
32.	Lukas Adomas	Directorate of Curonian Spit National Park, Lithuania		adomas.lukas@nerija.lt	
33.	Marczakiewicz Piotr	Biebrza National Park, Poland	+48 606 185 856	Piotr.Marczakiewicz@biebrza.org. pl	
34.	Mevellec Marie	UNEP/CMS Secretariat, Germany	+49 176 52378062	marie.mevellec@cms.int	
35.	Morkėnas Žymantas	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania		zymantas.morkenas@bef.it	
36.	Navickas Kęstutis	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania		kestutis.navickas@bef.it	
37.	O'Brian Michael	Environment Directorate- General European Commission		michael.o'brian@ec.europa.eu	
38.	Pakalnis Romas	State Service for Protected Areas under the Ministry of Environment, Lithuania	+86 8815424	r.pakalnis@vstt.lt	
39.	Panteley Kseniya	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus, Belarus		chiquita10111@gmail.com	
40.	Pakšytė Eglė	Lithuanian Ornithological Society, Lithuania		egle686@gmail.com	
41.	Pavilonis Vaidas	Directorate of Nemuno Delta Regional Park, Lithuania		v.pavilonis@nemunodelta.lt	
42.	Poluda Anatolii	Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology Ukrainian National Academy Sciences; Ukrainian Society for Protection Birds, Ukraine	+380 66 420 2325	polud@izan.kiev.ua	

Nr./ No	Vardas, Pavardė/ Name, Surname	Organizacija/ Organisation	Kontaktinis telefonas/ Contact phone	El. pašto adresas/ E-mail address	Parašas/ Signature
43.	Pranaitis Arūnas	Administration of Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, Lithuania	8-687-9583	a.pranaitis@zuvinas.lt	
44.	Preikša Žydrūnas	Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Lithuania	8-688-34125	griciukas@gmail.com	
45.	Protasevich Vadim Nikolaeovich	The State Nature Protection Establishment "Republican Biological Reserve "Sporovsky", Belarus		rbz.sporovskij@gmail.com	
46.	Raudonikis Liutauras	Lithuanian Ornithological Society, Lithuania		liutauras.raudonikis@birdlife.lt	
47.	Reihmanis Jānis	Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia	31 29451116	janis.reihmanis@ldf.lv	
48.	Sendžikaite Jūratė	Baltic Environmental Forum, Lithuania	861153582	jurate.sendzikaite@bef.lt	
49.	Skirdaila Arūnas SKR10411A	Farmer, Lithuania	865080179	visasdarbas@gmail.com	
50.	Stawiarz Patrycja	General Directorate for Environmental Protection, Poland	+48 608 582 503	patrycja.stawiarz@gdos.gov.pl	
51.	Šveistytė Laima	Plant Gene Bank, Lithuania	868293412	laima.sveistyte@botanika.lt	
52.	Tegetmeyer Cosima	Greifswald Mire Centre, Germany		cosimat@gmx.de	
53.	Thiam Sene Ndeye	Direction Parcs Nationaux Senegal, Senegal		ndeyesenethiam2003@yahoo.fr	
54.	Vabuolas Regimantas	Administration of Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve, Lithuania	867434185	regimantasemail@gmail.com	
55.	Vegvari Zsolt	Hortobágy National Directorate, Hungary		vegvari@hnp.hu	



Nr./ No	Vardas, Pavardė/ Name, Surname	Organizacija/ Organisation	Kontaktinis telefonas/ Contact phone	El. pašto adresas/ E-mail address	Parašas/ Signature
56.	Zarankaite Jurate	Directorate of Curonian Spit National Park, Lithuania	8 648 76 118	gama@nerija.lt	
57.	BELCHEV BORIS	boisvai samdomas amatojos	8 380 48 20	boris.belchev@atetabudka.lt	
58.	Vojtkas Boanas	šiltes na. vicaroras	8 616 4 5148	vojtkas.boanas@istati.lt	
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### **List of information about the Seminar in national and international media**

#### **2 INTERNET ARTICLES IN NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MEDIA:**

1. Tarp Lietuvos gamtos turtų – itin reta pasaulyje meldinė nendrinukė. – In: Kauno diena, 2015-05-19 (available on <http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/ivairenybes/gamta/tarp-lietuvos-gamtos-turtu-itin-reta-pasaulyje-meldine-nendrinuke-691676#.VYKvz6YwxUR> )
2. Tarp Lietuvos gamtos turtų – itin reta pasaulyje meldinė nendrinukė. – In: Gynas.lt, 2015-05-19 (available on <http://gynas.delfi.lt/gamta/svarstys-kaip-issaugoti-nykstanti-pauksti.d?id=68005194> )

#### **1 INTERNET ARTICLE IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA:**

Heredia B., 2015: Aquatic Warbler: experts meet to discuss the next steps for its long-term protection. – In: Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (available on <http://www.cms.int/aquatic-warbler/en/news/aquatic-warbler-experts-meet-discuss-next-steps-its-long-term-protection> )